

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: June 30, 2020
Time: 10:00am
Place: Zoom Meeting
Egremont

Present via zoom meeting were Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie.

Also present were Joan Goodkind, Stephen Cohen, Richard Allen, Eileen Vining, Barbara Kalish, Morriss Partee, Erika Ludwig, Joyce Frater, David Seligman and Laura Allen.

It was announced that the meeting is video and audio recorded.

The Board voted unanimous to maintain the current roles of George McGurn being Chairman and Luinda Vermeulen being Vice-Chair. Chairman McGurn was congratulated on his re-election.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the June 9, June 12 and June 23, 2020 meetings were adopted with minor edits.

SCHEDULED ISSUES:

It was agreed that a final interview by the Board with Tim Hughes for the position of Highway Personnel Member was not needed. The Human Resources Committee recommends him for the position. The Committee found him very impressive, he is fully qualified and has all the necessary licenses. The Board voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the HR Committee and offer him the position. He will be asked to respond in 2 weeks.

TOWN OFFICIALS:

Barbara Kalish reported on plans for the town's 245th birthday. The pandemic has made it extremely tough to plan. The planning group is considering a virtual only celebration this year. Two initiatives are being considered: A video and gathering of photos from Egremont showcasing yesterday, today and tomorrow. And a T-shirt with the town's seal. Sponsorships will be explored to pay for a certain number of shirts that could be won in a contest or distributed first come, first serve. Or people could order and pay for their own. The t-shirts can be ordered on line for \$20. \$10 goes to the town and \$10 to the company making the shirts. If able to do an onsite event the planning group would like to hold the event at French Park with a cake, music and possibly a float. The planners will meet again later in the week to decide whether to go virtual or live.

NEW BUSINESS:

Joan Goodkind expressed her concern over the limited and dangerous public access to Prospect Lake. Not a new topic to the Board, Chairman McGurn noted that accessible and safe access to the lake was a goal all shared but no solution has ever been found. Options available are to improve the current access which is difficult because the lakes proximity to the road; access through the campground which the current owner does not want to accommodate; someone, maybe the town, purchasing the campground and allowing access; rebuilding the walkway and boat launch that was constructed on the piece of land owned by the Mass Department of Conservation & Recreation. The DCR site is on the canal to the lake, not the lake. The canal passes in front of privately owned lots and those people have already expressed their unwillingness to allow access in front of their land. And the canal is full of silt and would need to

be dredged. In the past the Friends of Prospect Lake have studied this issue and offered to pay the campground for access to the lake by Egremont residents. David Seligman noted that the laws regarding materials to be used in wetlands have changed since the last access was constructed on the DCR land. Richard Allen noted that a prior Committee formed to try to get access to the lake was unsuccessful but the following options were considered:

1. A walkway along the canal but that interfered with property owners rights and the canal would need to be dredged at considerable cost.
2. Build a parking area in the corner of French Park across from the campground entry and make a walkway to the lake access.
3. Move the road away from the lake.
4. Build up the area between the road and the lake - such as a wall.
5. Deal with the campground.
6. Buy property to make access on.

Richard said there was new option - the Town could buy land on Mill Road to access the lake near the dam. The dam is currently a serious liability which the campground owner is supposed to be repairing. Talks will continue between all in hopes of coming up with a viable solution.

The Board approved the following interdepartmental transfers:

Highway Construction to Highway Vehicle repairs \$2,868.25
Water Department Repairs to Water Department Wages \$9,000
Police Collective Bargaining to Police Department Expenses \$11,650
Police Collective Bargaining to Police Vehicle Expenses \$7,219

These transfers need to be approved by the Finance Committee in order to be final.

Joan Goodkind asked that the town consider moving towards allocating more funding to support community services, a topic of concern at Town Meeting. Chairman McGurn explained the budget process which begins in early winter during which the community services request the amount of funds that they need for their operations. This process is done through a public venue and all Egremont residents are invited to attend those meetings. Vice-Chairman Vermeulen expressed her dismay at the lack of participation in the budget meetings held by the Board and the Finance Committee.

Erika Ludwig was unable to continue to attend the meeting due to another commitment so her request to use French Park for her Fiddler's meeting will be discussed at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

David Seligman has the Working Forests Initiative grant application for a stewardship program completed with the exception of the location. The Board agreed that the Karner Brook Watershed protection property on Mount Washington Road was the most appropriate property to apply for as it already has an outdated stewardship program. The Board voted unanimously to designate that property. Once the application is completed, Chairman McGurn will sign it. David will sign for the Conservation Commission.

The Building Inspector is setting up a log in for the Conservation Commission to access the on-line building permit program so they can review applications for compliance with the Wetlands Protection Act.

The Board will ask the Road Superintendent to follow up on the Shared Streets grant program with a focus on Prospect Lake Road, and/or Boice Road.

Morriss Partee reported that a draft Host Community Agreement has been sent to the Town's Legal Counsel Jeremia Pollard for his review. Chairman McGurn noted that two areas of concern were how Emerald River planned to fund the business and the removal of the clause indemnifying the Town. Mr. Partee reported that the Outreach meeting will be held on July 2 via zoom. The Cannabis Control Commission application is completed pending the HCA and certificate of holding the outreach meeting. The concern on Emerald River's part about the indemnification clause is that it seemed to hold Emerald River responsible for years of future taxes if they didn't open. Concern was expressed over the lateness of the notice to abutters of the outreach meeting though the notice time line did conform to the regulations.

Town Meeting was a resounding success even with the small amount of rain.

COVID-19:

The status of the dog park will remain for the time being.

The tennis court reservation system is going well and will remain the same.

There was an issue at the Little League field when there was a group using the field for multiple family in violation of state guidelines.

No other changes will be made at the Park at this time.

FOLLOW UPS:

The Town has received the funds for the Taxi Grant. Vice-Chair Vermeulen reported that she has received confirmation of receipt on the van grant.

The School District Consolidation Committee will meet July 1. There is confusion over the process around the school budget and what the status of a certified budget is. Chairman McGurn will follow up on this.

(Vice-Chairman Vermeulen experienced technical difficulties and was dropped from the zoom meeting for a short time.)

SELECTMEN'S ITEMS:

The Board will meet on July 7 solely for the purpose of appointments to the Finance Committee and the Planning Board. The next regular meeting of the Board will be July 14 at 10am.

Vice-Chairman Vermeulen expressed concern over illegal fireworks that may take place in Egremont. She will contact the Police Chief to express her concerns.

The Town of Mount Washington voted to pay the fire services fee that the Town assessed. A review of the agreement which take place in the near future.

Meeting adjourned at 12:04pm.

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.20/jun30

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.